



News From:
U.S. Congressman John B. Larson
serving Connecticut's First District
1001 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
221 Main Street, 2nd Floor
Hartford, CT 06108

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 28, 2000 LARSON BLASTS
REPUBLICANS FOR REMOVING NORTHEAST HOME HEATING
OIL RESERVE AUTHORIZATION FROM BILL**

WASHINGTON, D.C.-U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01) today condemned the Republican leadership of the House and Senate for removing the authorization for the Northeast Home Heating Oil Reserve and the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) from the conference report on the Energy and Water Appropriations bill. Despite vehement opposition, the bill was passed by a vote of 301 to 118.

"I am stunned by the actions of the Republican leadership," said Larson. "By removing the authorization for the Northeast Home Heating Oil Reserve from the conference report, they are effectively depriving low-and middle income families and the elderly in New England of one of the tools which could be used to provide affordable home heating oil this winter. Their actions today allowed the people of Connecticut and the rest of New England to see the true colors of the Republican leadership, something they are not likely to forget."

"The release of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, while a timely and reasonable move on the part of the President, is not going to be enough to soften the blow that New England is going to feel this winter because of the outrageous cost of heating their homes. The home heating oil reserve is something that I fully support and intend to fight very hard for it in the last few weeks of this Congress. The reserve is vitally important to the people in the First District, more so than the release of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, because

the home heating oil could be pumped directly into homes and would not have to be refined. Removing the authorization is incredibly short sighted and a slap in the face of the working families and elderly people of New England who, because of the Republican leadership, will now have some hard choices ahead of them this winter, such as having to decide between groceries and heating their homes."

"I would urge the President to think of these people who are going to be hurt, and veto this spending bill," said Larson.

Language that would have reauthorized the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and the Northeast Home Heating Oil Reserve was deleted from the bill, H.R. 4733, the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Conference Report. The bill provides \$23.6 billion for fiscal year 2001, which is \$2.4 billion more than was allotted for the current fiscal year.

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